NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

WINFIELD SCOTT.

The lives of men who have risen to high station by the mere arts of popularity, and who have really never done any thing worthy of remembrance, are easily told. A single page of History is more than they can claim. At most, it could only say of them that they lived, and that they enjoyed great offices. But when a man has really performed many remarkable, and even splendid actions, it becomes very difficult to relate his life within so small a space as I am about to take. It can, of course, only be done by passing very slightly over the smaller or less necessary facts of the story, and dwelling principally upon the greater and more interesting ones. This is the manner in which I will endeavor to write a short life of the great American Commander, (for those who have not leisure to read one as long as it ought to be.) To write it otherwise than simply and faithfully, there is no temptation; for the magnitude of a great part of the events is such as to require no embellishment, and their notoriety forbids all misrepresentation.

HIS PARENTAGE AND EDUCATION.

WINFIELD SCOTT was born on the small plantation of his father, William Scott, near Petersburg, Virginia, on the 13th of June, 1786, the year before the formation of our Constitution. He was the younger of two sons, and had three sisters. His grandfather was a Scotch gentleman, who had taken part in the rebellion of 1745, and fought against the King. Forced to fly his country, he took refuge in Virginia, where he became a lawyer. Dying early, he transmitted to his grandson probably a larger amount of hatred to British Kings than of property. His son became a farmer, and married Ann Mason, a young lady of better family than fortune, but of great virtues and sense—qualities for which she soon came to have great occasion; for her husband died young, leaving her the sole guardian of five children, and an estate which only a high degree of prudence could render sufficient for their support and education. The excellent lady, however, discharged the difficult task admirably. To do so required great industry, frugality, and orderliness; and to the constant lesson of these (yet not without the still higher ones of Religion, and of a love of honor and knowledge) young Scott was bred up; no nursling of ease and indulgence, but the hardy child of difficulty and fortitude. His own exertions seconding his mother's management, a good education was obtained for him; and, finally, selecting his grandfather's as his profession, he attended a course of law lectures at William and Mary College; after which he entered a lawyer's office, and in 1806 was admitted to the Bar. For a year afterwards he rode the circuit. In the mean time he had lost his mother.

HOW HE BECOMES A SOLDIER.

In the summer of 1807 occurred the wanton attack of the British frigate Leopard upon our unprepared ship, the Chesapeake, and the seizure and impressment of several of the latter's crew as English subjects. This outrage excited a violent public resentment throughout our country. Young Scott shared in it most ardently, and, a war seeming to be on the point of breaking out at once, joined a volunteer troop of horse raised in Petersburg to defend our coast, and marched with them down to the shore of Lynnhaven Bay, where for a while they took up their station in expectation of a British invasion. Neither our Government nor the British had yet made up its mind; this little cloud of war soon blew over; and our volunteers were called home again; but even this short and bloodless expedition had probably been enough to rouse in our young hero the native passion for arms, and to decide his future career. Every thing, however, looking peaceful once more, he returned for a time to his practice. But our difficulties with the pretended "Queen of the Seas" speedily again thickened. Mr. Jefferson tried in vain the weak remedies of an Embargo and a Non-intercourse act. It became clear that a sure-enough war could not be much longer avoided: an army, therefore, was to be raised, and, a bill for this purpose being brought forward in Congress at the close of the year 1807, Scott applied for a commission. The bill was passed in the April following, and in May the great soldier that was to be was appointed by President Jefferson a captain of light artillery. During the rest of 1808 he was employed on the recruiting service and in the study of his new profession.

QUARREL WITH GEN. WILKINSON.—ITS CONSEQUENCES.

In 1809 he was ordered to Louisiana, and placed for a time under the command of Gen. Wilkinson, an officer on whom, in common with many others of his countrymen, he looked as an accomplice of Burr's conspiracy, and afterwards as turning informer against his associates. Thinking so ill of his commander, he declined all offers of his favor, and even made no secret of his bad opinion of him. This coming to Wilkinson's ears, he became bitterly the young soldier's enemy, and watched the opportunity for revenge. About this time he was removed from the command there, and Gen. Wade Hampton appointed in his place. Upon this Scott spoke of him openly as "a traitor," as indeed he legally might; for the "Rules and Articles of War" only forbid disrespectful language or behavior towards one's commanding officer, not all one's superiors at a distance. Seizing upon this pretext, and that of his having, while acting, without experience, as paymaster to the company he recruited, withheld for some two months about fifty dollars in all of pay money to cover some of their debts to a sutler for which he had rendered himself liable, Wilkinson brought Scott to trial before a court-martial, in the hope of procuring his dismissal from the army. The court acquitted Scott of all the charges of "ungentlemanly conduct" and of all fraudulent intention, but convicted him of "unofficerlike conduct" in two points: first, in withholding the fifty dollars, as above explained; and, secondly, in having said at a public table that "Burr and Wilkinson were the only traitors he had ever seen;" and that "the latter was a liar and a scoundrel." For these two facts they condemned him to suspension from rank, pay, and emoluments for twelve months, but recommended to the President the remission of nine months of that punishment. Severe as, even in the eyes of the court, was this sentence, it was executed in full. It did not, however, lessen Capt. Scott's military character, except for personal prudence. His brother-officers pretty generally thought as he did, and only held their peace. Not so, however, the public thereabouts; they sympathized entirely with the out-spoken young officer, and gave him a complimentary dinner. Scott now seemed, of course, to be about to receive a check in his professional advancement. But I have observed through life that seeming misfortunes are seldom really such, except to the common run of men. Them they overthrow; the truly great they generally help. The blow which oversets the weak and terrifies the coward, rouses the strong man and fires the brave. Scott was not disheartened; but at once threw himself upon a more thorough and systematic study of tactics and the whole science of war. For this, a year's removal from the duties of the camp gave him a most profitable leisure. When he re-appeared in service he was a far better soldier than he would have become during the same time but for Wilkinson's attempt to be revenged upon him.

WAR DECLARED—HULL'S SURRENDER—PUBLIC DISCOURAGEMENT.

At last, on the 18th June, 1812, the war so long expected was declared, but reluctantly by our Government. There had been abundant time for preparation, yet it was ill-prepared; and its first effort, that under Gen. Hull, for seizing Upper Canada, though highly practicable, was so ill-supported and so feebly conducted as to cost us at once the whole army sent on that enterprise. It entered Canada from Ohio, at Detroit, on the 12th July, 1812, and capitulated, at the same place, only one month and two days afterwards. This most unexpected event, while it enraged and mortified the nation, shook very seriously the country's and even the soldier's confidence in our commanders and our troops, or the ability of either to withstand the experience of British generals and the discipline of British armies. Under such a feeling victory grows scarcely possible, and the war must have been little but a succession of disgraces, if a daring young soldier had not speedily come forward to break on land, as Hull did at sea, the spell of England's supposed superiority.

SCOTT IS PROMOTED—HIS FIRST SHOT AT THE ENEMY.

The rapid professional attainments of Scott and his high qualities for the soldier had now been perceived. He was in July, 1812, promoted to the lieutenant-coloneley of the second regiment of artillery and sent to Black Rock, there to protect, with the two companies of Towson and Barker, its little navy yard. While he lay there, on the 9th of October, his assistance was asked by Lieut. Elliott, of the navy, towards capturing two British armed brigs (the Adams and the Caledonia) which were moored under the guns of Fort Erie, almost opposite. He at once sent Capt. Towson and a part of his company; getting ready meantime to give his help, if necessary, from the shore. The attempt was gallant and successful; the brigs were captured; but in carrying them off one of them (the Adams) drifted ashore upon Squaw Island, where, the batteries of the fort commanding her, Elliott took to his boats again and abandoned her. The enemy now sent armed boats to recover her; but she lay within the reach of Scott's guns as well as the fort's, and he drove back their boats as the fort had driven off Elliott. The contest who should finally bear her off was quite sharp, and tried very well the artillery practice on either side. At last, however, Scott's ardor and skill prevailed; he recovered the brig, and held her until by the orders of Gen. Smythe (afterwards noted for his proclamations and his discoveries in the Apocalypse) she was burnt.

BRAVE LITTLE BATTLE OF QUEENSTOWN HEIGHTS.

This exploit roused to such a degree the force of militia, about 2,500 strong, which lay below at Lewistown, under Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer, with about 450 regulars, that they demanded to be led at once across into Canada, where, indeed, there was not then within reach a British force more than half as large to make head against them. On the other hand, there was no motive but that of honor for such an invasion: for the Government had made no preparations for any such movement; and it would, necessarily, have soon been cut off, if it advanced, or driven back, if it did not. Besides, not even the easy preparation of boats enough for carrying over a thousand men at a time had been made. But Van Rensselaer's men threatened to leave him if he did not send a force across; and he yielded. The plan adopted was, to cross to Queenstown, with two columns of about three hundred men each; to carry by storm the batteries on the Heights; and, a lodgment for invasion being thus made, to hold on there until one could be got ready. When, on the 12th, the news of what was intended reached Scott at Black Rock, he forthwith hastened to the scene of action, foreseeing well that there would be need of him; and offered himself and his artillery. But the arrangements were already made, and all that he could obtain was leave to bring down his corps and to act afterwards according to circumstances. He accordingly came to Lewistown the next morning, and took up a position from which his guns could best play upon the enemy's batteries and cover our landing. And now the two divisions of attack moved off, in only eight boats. Col. Solomon Van Rensselaer led the way: Col. Chrystie followed, with the second division. The former succeeded in landing a part of his men; the latter's boats were swept down by the current; a portion of the men falling into the enemy's power, while the rest were driven back. Among the latter was their brave commander, wounded; who, however, crossed yet again with some reinforcements, and bore his part in the fight. Meantime, those who landed with Van Rensselaer formed and advanced under a murderous cannonade from the heights. Beneath it, the Colonel and all his officers fell, wounded or killed. Happily, others were landed in time to take their places and to lead on a very gallant assault upon the mid-way battery and that of the summit. Both these were carried in quick succession, and their routed defenders forced to take refuge in a strong stone house near the water's edge. Here they were reinforced by Governor Brock in person, who had now arrived.

That gallant and beloved officer soon afterwards fell, with his secretary, Col. McDonald, in leading back his men to retake the heights. He falling, they were repulsed. Meantime scattered parties of Americans had been getting over, from time to time, in the few and half-disabled boats; but scarcely one out of two in these parties was able to join the fight. The rest were either landed too high up, where the cliff could not be scaled, or were swept too far down and made prisoners. Probably six hundred were the utmost ever at one time engaged in the fight. Just at the time of Brock's fall Col. Scott reached the heights; he had at last obtained leave to cross and take the command. He immediately drew up his men in the best position that could be taken for maintaining the ground and covering the landing of the militia expected from the other side. Vain was that latter expectation, however; the militia refused to cross. Some constitutional scruples about the President's right to march them beyond the border had suddenly seized them, and they left their comrades at Queenstown to their fate. The enemy was not so nice about helping their people. At the first sound of the cannonade Gen. Sheaffe had marched from Fort George, eight miles below, with eight hundred and fifty British regulars; and a nearer body of five hundred Indian warriors had flung themselves forward upon Queenstown. These latter, arriving first, reinforced the worsted enemy, who now, with quite superior numbers, poured upon our position a terrible attack. It was on the point of overwhelming our men; they were faltering under it; when Scott, who had been personally directing in the rear the repair of some captured cannon (now most needful) rushed back to the front, reanimated our men, and, turning the defence into a fierce attack, drove the routed assailants in headlong flight by sheer valor, and then resumed his position. This was several times repeated. Distinguishable to all not more by his remarkable stature and the full-dress uniform in which he fought than by his presence at every point and the fiery intrepidity with which he met or led every assault, Scott became the frequent mark of Indian rifles. A gallant militia officer, Gen. Wadsworth, again and again shielded him, with his own person, from the savage marksmen. It was now an occasion when not manœuvering was to be used, but an example of unconquerable courage to be given; and, therefore, when urged to quit his regimentals, as making him too conspicuous, who was quite enough so without it, he more than once said, "No, I will die in my robes." Fired by his example, all, militia and regulars alike, fought like tigers; and the enemy was obliged to draw off.

And now again reinforcements would not have been too late. But none came, and every thing grew desperate. For now marched up to join the adversary Gen. Sheaffe, with such a force as left no choice but either to surrender or to die gloriously. Scott mounted on the trunk of a fallen tree and exhorted his men to the latter choice. It was necessary, he told them, to wipe out the shame of Hull's surrender, and teach foe and friend that Americans knew how to fight to the last. Their lives would be well laid down for such a purpose, and would, in the war now only just begun, be worth many victories. Weary, few, and sore as they were, his men all cheerfully assented, and prepared for a last struggle. Sheaffe, however, more wary than the earlier British leaders, did not indulge us with any more charges, but coolly took his measures for surrounding them; and men who are surrounded (not being able to fight on all sides at once) must be made prisoners, whether they will or no. For a time our heroes held their ground most bravely against three or four to one; but at last many of them were forced over the precipice of the river bank, and the rest, two hundred and ninety-three in number, were compelled to lay down their arms. This was, however, a surrender almost as glorious as most triumphs; it redeemed the honor of our arms; showed, as Scott had designed, that Americans need turn their backs on nobody; and proved, by defeat itself, that conquest was close at hand. Decatur, that bravest of seamen, soon after said to Scott: "Sir, you have led the way to victory."

IRISH PRISONERS ABOUT TO BE EXECUTED—SCOTT PREVENTS IT.

The capture among our troops of a number of naturalized citizens, about sixty, whom their features or tongue betrayed to be of Irish birth, led, upon this occasion, to a British claim to deal with such prisoners as not entitled to the laws of war, but punishable as traitors to their King. The whole body of those taken were sent down with Scott by water to Quebec. There they were taken out of the vessel, to be shipped for Boston on another, under cartel, with a view to their being exchanged. When this shipment began, Scott soon perceived that they were selecting and meant to detain the Irishmen. He instantly interfered, and denied their right to make any difference between one American citizen and another. The officers haughtily told him he was a prisoner himself, and that they were not going to be governed by him.

He was not a man, however, to give up his fellow-citizens, nor to be silenced in this manner; and when they again began to select, he peremptorily ordered his men not to answer any further questions. At this the Englishmen grew exasperated, and ordered him to go below deck. But, though their prisoner, they could not intimidate nor manage him. A high quarrel ensued: but he would not yield an inch; declaring to them resolutely that the life of an English prisoner should answer for that of every Irishman they detained. And he kept his word: for, although they kept and shipped off to England for trial the twenty-three sons of the Green Isle that they had already picked out, they could, from his making them keep silent, pitch upon no more; while he, as soon as he got to Washington after being exchanged, reported the matter to the President, and brought about the passage of a law for retaliating upon English prisoners any punishment inflicted on those taken from us under pretence of their being native-born, and therefore perpetual subjects of Great Britain. Nor was it long before Scott himself took a plenty of captives; nor did he fail to set aside at once, as he had pledged himself to do, a number as hostages for the safety of his Queenstown comrades. The consequence was that none of them were hurt; that they were all, except two who had died, sent back to their adopted country together after the peace of 1815; and that, by the particular care of Scott, (then risen to the highest rank,) their back-pay and bounty lands were secured to them. By a singular accident, too, just when they were landing in New York, he chanced to be passing the wharf, and recognised them, as they did him. Great may be supposed was the joy of that meeting on both sides, and strongly was it expressed by the warm-hearted Hibernians; for Irishmen seldom forget their friends. But we must return to our story.

SCOTT SENT BACK AS ADJUTANT GENERAL TO DEARBORN'S ARMY.

The campaign of 1813 had just been opened by the taking of York, when Scott arrived on the Niagara frontier, in May, as the chief of the staff to Gen. Dearborn. This important post requires the skill to organize and direct all the details and all supplies and materials of war for whatever operations the commander-in-chief may have decided upon. His adjutant general should be his right hand; for upon that officer mainly depends all the preparation of battle. Scott conducted his duties greatly to the satisfaction of all. The labor and the honor would have been quite enough for most men; but he claimed, besides, the right of taking the command of his own regiment, whenever it came into action. The claim was conceded to him, and he soon made use of it.

HE HEADS THE CAPTURE OF FORT GEORGE.

Between Lakes Erie and Ontario, on the Canadian side, lies a peninsula commanded by Fort Erie above and Fort George below. We were now in possession of the lower lake, and had taken York, now called Toronto. Gen. Dearborn lay upon this bank of the Niagara, with between four and five thousand good troops, while Commodore Chauncey was superior to the enemy on the lake below. In this situation of things, Gen. Dearborn determined to strike, with the assistance of Chauncey's fleet, at Fort George, as the key to the peninsula, which is on that side most important as the necessary avenue of communication between these two great lakes. The troops crossed through a part of the lake, from a little east of our own Fort Niagara, on the 27th of May, in six divisions of boats, protected by the armed vessels of Chauncey. Scott had volunteered to command the "forlorn hope," and therefore led the first division of boats. The landing was made dangerous not only by the severe fire of the enemy's musketry, but by a heavy surf. To check the former, Chauncey's schooners anchored off shore; while to carry the loaded boats safely through the latter a sailor friend of Scott, a spirit much like him, the gallant Capt. Perry, then little known for what he was, lent his skill on the water and brought them through successfully, amidst a shower of balls. The division were all got on shore about 9 in the morning. The narrow beach was bordered by a sharp bank of eight or ten feet high, lined by the enemy. This, of course, was to be instantly carried. Scott rapidly formed his men and led them on to the charge. At the first onset they were unable to scale the bank, and Scott himself to all appearance was killed; so that Dearborn, who was with a spy-glass watching them from Chauncey's vessel, seeing his favorite officer fall backwards from the bank, burst into tears and cried out, "He is lost! he is killed!" At the next moment, however, he was on his legs again; he had only been pushed down the bank, like many others, heels over head; rallied his men, charged more furiously for his fall, beat up and burst through the enemy's bayonets, drove him back, and gained the level, front to front with him. Then followed a desperate and close contest of about twenty minutes. In that sort of thing, however, Scott has never been beaten. At such moments every thing depends on animation; and he has that power over men in battle which gives them an irresistible impetuosity. The British fought as they always do: but they were broke, routed, and pursued most fiercely. That pursuit was, however, for awhile diverted to another object; it led him close to the gates of Fort George. He perceived that the enemy were abandoning it and about to blow up its magazines. To save these (though dangerous) he took two companies from the head of his column in order to seize it. As he approached, one of the magazines exploded, scattering timbers on all sides. One of these struck him from his horse, much hurt. Still he had the gates forced, was the first to enter, and with his own hand pulled down the British flag still flying. His rapid work saved for us the other magazines, the artillery, and the stores deposited there. All this quickly done, he remounted, rejoined his column, and pushed with fresh vigor the pursuit of the flying enemy. For five miles he pressed them hard; had at last got amidst their stragglers, with their main body in full view, and would undoubtedly in a short time have captured them all, when a peremptory order of recall forced him to give up the chase. He had already disregarded two such orders; saying, in answer to one of them, "The General does not know that, in just seventy minutes, I shall make the enemy's whole force prisoners." Even as it was, he would have taken them all if he had only had two good troops of horse. In this brilliant affair, it is remarkable that Scott may be said, by his valor and rapidity, to have done with his single division all that had been planned for six; for the others, except in small part, never overtook him, and those few only in time to join in the chase.

LEADS EXPEDITIONS TO BURLINGTON HEIGHTS AND YORK.

For some time after the capture of Fort George our army lay there, entrenched and inactive, under a variety of generals: first Dearborn, then Lewis, then Boyd, and then Wilkinson. During this time the only enterprises attempted were the necessary duty of foraging; and this was entrusted to Col. Scott. He led out parties for this purpose twice a week. For every load of provender that he got he had to fight. Many sharp miniature battles did he have in this way, with an enemy always on the watch for him; but his measures were always so well taken that he never failed to be successful. In truth, how could it have been otherwise? He was not born to be beat, either in great battles or small. In July he had the honor to be appointed to a double regiment, or, we may say, to be made the colonel of two regiments at once; upon which he laid down his Adjutant-Generalship. In September, an expedition against Burlington Heights, where the enemy was reported to have a large deposite of military stores, was planned; and its execution was given to Scott. He accordingly embarked on the little fleet of Chauncey, and paid a military visit to the heights; but found nobody at home there to receive him. The stores, too, had disappeared, as much as the men. To take their revenge for the disappointment, Scott and Chauncey determined to look in upon the enemy at York. So they sailed thither and made good a landing, marines and soldiers, under Scott's command. Here they made themselves amends for what was not at Burlington; large depots of clothing, provisions, and other military stores, with several pieces of cannon and eleven armed boats were taken; and the barracks and public storehouses were destroyed; after which, better satisfied, our squadron returned to Niagara.

WILKINSON'S DESCENT TOWARDS MONTREAL.

Meantime, a movement under Gen. Wilkinson had been devised, which, if boldly carried forward to the last, would have almost entirely cut the communication between Upper and Lower Canada, and given us permanent possession of the former. We commanded Lake Ontario and held both sides the Niagara. Our force there was strong; we had, then, only to transport it, under convoy of Chauncey's fleet, to the outlet of Lake Ontario, and descend the St. Lawrence in boats, in order to reach Montreal. The passage down the river was not sufficiently guarded by forts or troops, and Montreal had a garrison, when Wilkinson abandoned the undertaking, of but 600 men. Success, therefore, was certain, with Wilkinson's army only; but, besides, Gen. Hampton was to have joined him, from Chateaugué, in New York, with a strong division. This junction Hampton, from a fear of falling short of supplies, failed to make: whereupon Wilkinson, though already far advanced on his enterprise and clearly within reach of its accomplishment, gave it up, and made his way back to French Mills. Up to the moment of this unsoldierly decision, the expedition had gone forward almost without a check. Scott, though at first left behind to guard his late prize, Fort George, and erect for it better defences, had been allowed, upon the enemy's withdrawing from that quarter, to leave Fort George to Gen. McClure, and to hasten after the expedition, which he overtook at Ogdensburg. He immediately sought and obtained the post of honor—the command of the advance-guard of the army, leading the way to every danger, every point of resistance that was to be overcome, and doing it always alike with daring, with prudence, and with success. In this manner he passed, in the leading and largest boat, the severe fire of the strong British fort Wellington; engaged and routed, at Hooppole Creek, the equal force (700 men) of Col. Dennis, pursuing him till night and taking many prisoners; and captured, after a sharp fight, Fort Matilda, which commanded the narrowest place on the whole St. Lawrence. Thus, whatever the delays, the mistakes, and the final failure of an expedition which, under a vigorous General, would have covered itself with honor, Scott at least did himself credit throughout, performed all that it was his part to do, and gained reputation while his old friend Wilkinson was losing it.

SCOTT SELECTED TO INSTRUCT AND DISCIPLINE GEN. BROWN'S ARMY FOR THE NEXT CAMPAIGN.

Thus far, those larger operations of the war which had been entrusted to the more veteran Generals were, except Harrison's overthrow of Proctor, failures. It had become clear that either the contest must be given up, or another kind of commanders must be found. It was not that these men were too old, but that they were poor soldiers. They had never known enough to be made generals of; and now they were too old to learn. It is neither because a man is old or because he is young that you can make him safely a leader of armies: Nature must have created him for it, and Art have perfected the work. Nature made a Jackson and a Taylor: but she alone could never have made a master of war like Scott.

All the conduct of this young officer made the Government perceive that in him they had a man for victories. They had advanced him rapidly; and the more advanced the more had he shown himself fit for command. Indeed, it has been remarkable in him that, no matter what they have set him about, war or peace, fighting or negotiating, he has always done it better than any body else.

He was now, in the winter of 1813–14, called by the President to Albany, there to prepare all the supplies for the next campaign, and, under instructions from him, to consult on and settle with Gov. Tompkins certain important arrangements, political and military, which have not yet been divulged. That business done, he was, on the 9th March, 1814, promoted to the rank of Brigadier General, and sent to the Niagara frontier, there to form at Buffalo, by discipline and instruction, as fast as they arrived, a new army, meant to act there in the next campaign, under Major General Brown. That officer withdrew for three months to Sackett's Harbor, in order to leave this important operation entirely to Scott. He went about it accordingly with all his might. We had heretofore used the old English or rather Prussian system of tactics; but with a poor drill of even that: he at once adopted the far more perfect modern French one—that which we now employ—and placing the whole army in a Camp of Instruction, a huge practical military school, kept them incessantly, for the next three months, men and officers, at learning the whole business of fighting. First he taught the officers, and then they taught the men. Both were thoroughly trained to all the minor evolutions. This effected, he went on to the higher movements, not of mere squads and companies, battalions and regiments, brigades and divisions, but made them skilful in the manœuvre of whole armies; and, in a word, accustomed them to all the duties of the camp, the march, and the battlefield. He did his work thoroughly, and stopped not until he knew that we had now *one* army fit to cope with the best troops of Britain. He had received them from Gen. Brown raw recruits; he gave them back to him veterans in discipline: he had taken them in hand a mere crowd, (a mob with uniforms on;) they left him an invincible host filled with martial skill and confidence, and soon to sweep before them with the bayonet (that manliest test of the soldier) Wellington's old fire-eaters of the Spanish peninsula, that had never before given back.

THE NIAGARA CROSSED—FORT ERIE TAKEN—BATTLE OF CHIPPEWA.

All was now ready for action. At the end of June Gen. Brown returned to Buffalo, and on the 3d of July Scott and Ripley were sent across the Niagara with their brigades to take Fort Erie. It soon surrendered its 170 men, while the rest of our army passed over; and now preparations were at once made to attack without delay the British army, which, 2,100 strong, lay, under Gen. Riall, on the Chippewa below. Early on the 4th Scott moved forward in advance. He was soon met by the Marquis of Tweeddale, who for sixteen miles kept up a running fight with him, but could make no stand. By nightfall he was driven across the Chippewa, and at its bridge rejoined Riall; while Scott took up his quarters for the night on Street's creek, two miles above. The space between is the plain of Chippewa, midway on which occurred the next day's bloody battle. East of the plain runs the Niagara; west of it stretched a wood, bordering irregularly the battle-ground. On the 5th the chief part of the day had been consumed in skirmishes between our light troops and Indians with those of the enemy, when Gen. Riall chose, about four in the afternoon, to anticipate an attack on him in his lines by passing the bridge of the Chippewa and advancing to offer battle in the middle of the plain. Nothing could be fairer than the ground; and though he outnumbered us by some 200 men, he really supposed us to have at least that advantage over him, but that he was more than compensated by the superiority of his troops, who were mainly veterans that had fought under Wellington. Gen. Brown had been at the wood near the centre of the plain directing some of the movements of the skirmishers, when he saw Riall thus pass the bridge, display his columns, and come forward in order of battle. He immediately hastened back towards Scott's position, beyond the bridge of the upper stream. He met him about to cross into the plain merely to give his men a little drill, for he had yet received no order to engage. As they met, Gen. Brown simply said to him, "The enemy is advancing—you will have a fight," and passed on to the rear to order up Ripley's brigade.

The few words just recited were all the orders and all the instructions that he thought it necessary (such was his confidence in Scott) to give him. The latter advanced to pass the bridge, now within point-blank range of the enemy's battery of nine guns. His troops crossed it steadily, though not without loss, under that severe fire, and, deploying as they advanced, marched coolly up to the encounter. The artillery of Capt Towson was thrown off to the right flank, along the Chippewa road, to just the point where the opposing columns would meet in charge, so that it would not only play upon the enemy all the while, but, when the decisive shock came, rake him dreadfully from the flank. The enemy's artillery, on the contrary, though stronger, was far less judiciously posted, in such a manner that the advance of their own infantry on their left flank soon threw them between their batteries and our columns, and thus compelled their cannon to become useless against our line. So much for the artillery positions. Those of the infantry were on our side equally well disposed. The enemy came on in an unbroken line, which outflanked us and reached into the wood on our left. To remedy this, Leavenworth's battalion was obliqued to the right, McNeil's to the left, with an interval between them; while Jesup's battalion was obliqued still more to the left, so as to meet the enemy's right wing in the wood, and there hold it in check. At the point where this was done the wood projected more into the plain than in Jesup's rear; so that the enemy's line *out* of the wood was shorter than ours; and as their line in the plain continued to advance while that in the wood could not, the former was presently, at the critical moment when it came into contact with our centre under McNeil, outflanked by it in turn. These advantages had been at once seen and seized by superiority of generalship and that rapidity and precision of manœuvre to which his men had now been brought, so as to be able (as they should) to execute an important movement almost as soon as their general had conceived it. But this was not all; a still more decisive evolution was at hand.

The movements just described had brought the adverse lines to exactly that point at which that terrible stratagem called the "movement *en potence*" (a sort of double sidelong attack) can be employed. [In it, when you are within charging distance of the enemy, your flanks are suddenly pushed forward and your line thrown into the shape of the rafters of a rather flat-roofed house, while the enemy's line occupies, in regard to it, the position which the sleepers have to the rafters. The effect of this is to converge the fire of your line upon his centre and cut it in two; to finish which operation, you then charge upon him, (the two angles of your line moving upon the same point on which their double fire was just now poured,) and the bayonet ends what the balls began. This movement, when well executed, inevitably breaks your adversary's line, and is fatal: no troops can stand it.] Scott now put it in practice. The opposing lines had advanced upon each other, firing, halting, re-loading, and advancing again by turns, until now they were within eighty yards of each other. Then Scott gave the word for the evolution *en potence*. To add to its effect, he had a moment before ridden over to Towson's artillery, (which he perceived was, from the smoke and the enemy's advance, firing too much to the right,) and told that able gunner where next to pour his balls; and his next raking discharge was accordingly very destructive. A moment after, the infantry made its manœuvre. No sooner was its double fire poured in than Scott called out to McNeil's battalion, "The enemy say we are only 'good at long shot, and can't stand the cold iron! 'I call upon the Eleventh to give the lie to that 'slander! Charge!" A like order was given, at the same moment, to Leavenworth's battalion; and both bodies rushed upon the enemy's centre with the bayonet. It was instantly overthrown; and with it the whole main body of the British army broke, and fled in total confusion. About the same time Jesup, under a heavy fire, advanced upon the enemy in the wood, forced them to retire, and thus completed their defeat at all points. Such was the masterly activity of Scott (others may boast of "masterly inactivity") that before Ripley, whom Gen. Brown had gone to order up, could arrive, the battle had been won, and Scott was hotly pursuing the routed adversary back across Chippewa bridge into their entrenchments. It was at the moment when his terrific charge utterly broke them to pieces, and covered the plain with their fallen and their flying, that he raised up his hands on high and cried out, "Ten years of my life for a hundred good dragoons!" With but that little body of horse, to cut them off from the bridge, he might have destroyed or captured their whole force. Such was the battle of Chippewa. In proportion to the numbers engaged, a bloodier one has seldom been seen; for one-fourth of the combatants were killed or wounded. Almost equal in its terms, and fought as if by a regular challenge, it was yet decided with such a rapidity as affords an extreme proof of the conqueror's military skill; and would fairly, did it even stand alone, hand down his name as a remarkable one in the annals of warfare.

SECOND BATTLE OF THE CATARACT, OR OF LUNDY'S LANE.

On the 7th July Brown's army (Scott's brigade leading) forced the passage of the Chippewa, Riall retreating upon Forts George and Messasauga below; after reinforcing which he took refuge with his remaining force on Burlington Heights, there to await succors. Before attacking him there, Gen. Brown held it advisable to take the fortified places below him on the peninsula; for, like Scott afterwards, he did not admire marching when he was to have "a fire in his rear." But these British works were now such as field-artillery could not hurt; a battering-train was necessary; and this must be brought up from Sackett's Harbor by our fleet. It was accordingly waited for; but meantime Chauncey had fallen sick, and we temporarily lost the command of the Lake; so that the heavy guns could not come. Upon this Brown determined to leave the fortresses behind him and attack Riall upon Burlington Heights. But first he endeavored to draw him down from them by a feigned retreat up the Niagara and across the Chippewa, beyond which he encamped. The stratagem succeeded, but not until we suddenly met the enemy was its success known. On the afternoon of the 25th (Sunday) positive but false advice was received from a commandant on the American side of the Niagara, that Riall had thrown across at Lewiston a corps of one thousand men. Brown at once decided to compel their return, by threatening their rear and the forts below. For this purpose, Scott's brigade, now about 1,300 men, was dispatched down the river, at twenty minutes' notice. Within two miles it suddenly came upon a reconnoitering party of the enemy. A considerable body was speedily ascertained to be beyond the wood, (at Forsythe's house, just above the Falls,) which we were then approaching. It seemed certain that they could at most be only the other half of Riall's force, and that his movement was merely meant to protect the rear of the body he had sent across the Niagara. Pausing, therefore, only long enough to report the fact by an aid-de-camp to Gen. Brown, Scott pushed right on. He had no sooner passed the wood than he found himself in the presence—nay, under the severe fire—of a force full five hundred stronger than his own, and more advantageously posted. For they had chosen their position, and stood on it ready drawn up in order of battle, occupying with their artillery (nine pieces) an elevation which commanded the whole ground.

The British line lay stretched along Lundy's Lane, a little beyond (north of) it; its right, near which were its artillery, reaching to a wood; its left resting on the road parallel with the river, by which Scott was approaching, and from which diverged at right angles the lane. From their rear were marching to join them, up this same river road, reinforcements, while ours were to come along it from above. We need hardly say that this was Riall, and that instead of having (according to the positive information Brown was acting on) sent off one thousand of his men across the river, he had not sent one; but, on the contrary, was in the act of uniting with a large force which had arrived by the Lake at Fort George from Kingston and Prescott, the night before, by a concerted movement, under Lieutenant-General Sir Gordon Drummond. Strange to tell, information had been sent to Brown of a movement of the enemy, as occurring only a few hours before, which had not happened at all; while they had left him in complete ignorance of this most important event in the same quarter, happening the night before! Such was the situation in which, at a glance, Scott saw himself to be placed; if he fought, it must be at much disadvantage; and it was too late to draw off, except by a retreat which could hardly help being presently turned into a flight. Now, a flight was a thing he had never seen, and was not born to see. So he decided instantly to engage, as if Gen. Brown's whole force was present, and to fight it out, at whatever odds, until the latter could come to his assistance; to which end he sent him, by a second aide-de-camp, an account of the whole state of things.

It was now nearly sunset. Scott had seen that on the enemy's left flank lay a space of some two hundred yards, covered with brushwood, under concealment of which that flank might be turned. He instantly took advantage of it, and sent upon the service Jesup's battalion. They performed the duty finely; for they not only turned but broke their way back through the enemy's left wing, and, after thus cutting it off, returned to their own place in our line, bringing with them Major General Riall and some other British officers as prisoners. While we thus demolished their left wing, they attempted to return us the compliment upon ours, which their right considerably out-flanked. But Scott, always as quick to foil his adversary's manœuvres as to strike by his own, met this movement with McNeil's smaller but invincible battalion. A deadly contest followed; but the enemy was at last driven back, though not without severe loss on both sides. Meantime the main battle of the two centres had joined, and was fought most desperately. Brady's battalion, Leavenworth's battalion, and Towson's artillery there sustained with unshaken intrepidity the whole weight of the enemy's superior numbers; and now, to add to the horrors of the fight, the last light of day, which, glistening through the spray of the great cataract behind our columns when they engaged, had spread above their heads to the enemy's view a bright rainbow, as if the promise of victory was gone; and darkness, thickened by the smoke of battle, or only lighted up for an instant by the artillery's glow or the musketry's gleam, came to add to all that tug of the combat a blind fury, the veriest rage of war that can be breathed into the breasts of men when they set their teeth like a vice and their sinews like steel, and swear that nothing shall make them yield. It was thus our men fought through the fierceness of that bloody night-encounter. Scott, letting loose all that personal daring which a general must usually control, was every where, animating or directing or leading, and watching every shock or shift of the fight. His horse was killed under him; he mounted another: that, by and by, fell dead; he was quickly in the saddle of a third: he was himself wounded in the body; but still fought on, as if he had been bullet-proof. The conflict went thus until about 9 o'clock, when Gen. Brown arrived on the ground. The enemy had received several reinforcements from below, and another was not far off; but still we had the advantage: their wings had been beaten; their centre only maintained the contest, aided by their advantage of position on a ridge, and their yet greater advantage in the superior force and position of their artillery, which was more than twice as numerous as ours. While that was untaken it was evident that we could not defeat their centre; and as we had almost too little force to stand up against their centre, it had been impossible, until Brown's succors came up, to assail their fatal artillery. That, of course, as soon as he had made Scott repeat to him how matters stood at all points, became the first measure which he took. The regiment of Col. Miller, the heroic modesty of whose reply on that occasion will long preserve his name and his phrase as a watchword to Americans, was selected for this perilous service. He was summoned. "Sir," said Brown to him, "can you take that battery?" "I will try, sir," was his answer. He immediately set forward with his corps. But, ignorant of the ground, and with nothing to lead him over it but the occasional light of those deadly explosions themselves that he was going to muzzle, he might have missed the way, fallen upon some intervening forces, and failed. Scott, therefore, who knew "how the whole land lay," became his pilot in person, and led him through the darkness up to the point from which the attack was to be made. That done, he returned to his own division, in order to favor Miller's movement, by pressing the onset upon the enemy's front. Miller